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ABSTRACT

Androgynous persons accept both their masculine and feminine characteristics rather than adhere to traditional sex-role stereotypes. This study tested whether the multidimensional approach and psychological freedom of androgynous persons would give them greater self-esteem, self-acceptance, and acceptance of others, according to their own evaluations. Two hundred undergraduates were identified through the Bem Sex-Role Inventory as androgynous, masculine, feminine, and undifferentiated and took three tests designed to determine their self-evaluations of the three variables. Results show that the androgynous persons expressed higher degrees of self-esteem, self-acceptance, and acceptance of others than groups of masculine, feminine, or undifferentiated persons. In addition, masculine and androgynous persons reported higher self-evaluations than did undifferentiated and feminine identities. These results suggest that flexibility is mediated by one's sexual identity and that the androgynous person may be more capable of interpersonal competence. Three tables of findings are included. (CC)

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A MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ANDROGYNY AND SELF-ESTEEM, SELF-ACCEPTANCE AND ACCEPTANCE OF OTHERS

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Abstract

This study was concerned with an investigation of the impace of sexual identity on levels of self-esteem, self-acceptance and acceptance of others. It was hypothesized that because of a multidimensional approach and psychological freedom, the androgynous identity would be higher in self-evaluation of these variables. Results supported the hypothesis.

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A MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS
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Few would deny that one's self-esteem, self-acceptance and acceptance of others are functional objectives of interpersonal communication. As Giffin and Patton (1976) write, "interpersonal communication. . . involves the psychological interior of a person, his/her way of thinking about himself/herself as well as his/her way of relating to others (p.209)." Accordingly, the interpersonally competent communicator enjoys proportionally higher levels of self-esteem, self-acceptance and acceptance of others than less competent individuals. Both the Bochner and Kelley (1974) and Delia (1976) interpersonal competence conceptual frameworks contend that the skill of behavioral flexibility can be used to discriminate between effective and inept communicators. A subsequent empirical validation test of Bochner and Kelly's framework supported the discriminant powers of behavioral flexibility (Bochner and Yerby, 1977).

While the authors agree with Bochner and Kelly's suggestion that behavioral flexibility can be improved through instruction, research has suggested behavioral flexibility is mediated by one's sexual identity (Bem and Lenney, 1976; Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, and Rosenkrantz, 1972; Cosentino and Heilbrun, 1964; Goode, 1968; Parsons, 1964; Waxler and Mishler, 1970).

The purpose of this research was to investigate the impact of sexual identity on levels of self-esteem, self-acceptance and acceptance of others.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Independent Variable

Sexual Identity: Traditionally, sex has been examined as a dichotomous variable. A person is born with the genitals of one sex or the other, and that fact alone assigns the person a sex-role. Accordingly, specific sex-role related behaviors are then learned by individuals. However, recent reviews of literature (such as Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974) have concluded

that many sex-role related behaviors are no longer appropriate. In fact, some traditional sex-determined behaviors have been found to have negative consequences for personality development (Slater, 1961), marital harmony (Bott, 1964; Komarovsky, 1967; Parsons, 1964), level of achievement motivation (Stein and Smithless, 1969; Veroff, Wilcox, and Atkinson, 1953), and problem-solving performance (Carey, 1958). Thus, the old proposition that it is more advantageous for males and females to retain traditional sex-role identities has not proved accurate. Instead, such identities have been found to cause internal conflicts and be incompatable with both the individual's and society's interests (Broverman et. al., 1972).

A recent survey by Tavris (1977) indicated that both men and women were striving for an androgynous identity, i.e. one accenting both masculine and feminine characteristics, rather than adhering to traditional sex-role behavioral stereotypes. Men wanted to be more warm and loving than they felt they were and women wanted their men to be more gentle, romantic and expressive. Women have also been caught in a changing society that expects them to be alone and/or independent while able to bear children and provide comfort for others. With the advent of such thinking, the conceptualization of the androgynous identity has become important.

The principles of androgyny have been explained by Bakan's (1966) use of the concepts of agency, "libido," and communion, "eros." Bakan advocates that both agency and communion are mitigated in the individual. Androgyny has also been equated with "wholeness." In Jungian terms, androgyny is a search for a point of balance that unites the opposites, stabilizes the personality and brings forth a sense of wholeness (Bazin and Freeman, 1974). Thus, the concept of androgyny refer to; "(1) the complete person, that is, women who are assertive and men who are gentle; and (2) a harmonious human community, the emblem of which is the just and natural marriage of woman and man (Secor, 1974, p. 165)."

Because the androgynous individual blends the identities of masculinity

and femininity together into a multidimensional view of self, his/her actions need not be limited to traditional biologically defined behaviors. Instead, the androgynous person has the psychological freedom to engage in whatever behavior seems appropriate to the context and the people within the situation (Bem and Lenney, 1976). In essence, androgynous people have maximal behavioral flexibility.

Dependent Variables

Self-Esteem: Self-esteem exists in a social context and is traditionally defined as an "orientation of the self in relation to significant others along an evaluative dimension chosen by the evaluator himself (Ziller, 1973, p. 6)." Differences in self-esteem according to biological sex have been widely documented (Carlson, 1963; Carlson, 1965; Carlson and Levy, 1968; Eagly, 1967). Some research has also demonstrated that perceived positive characteristics of sexual identity are associated with high self-esteem. Recley (1972) found that conformity to male stereotypes was more conducive to maintenance of high levels of self-esteem, than conformity to female stereotypes in both males and females. Berger (1968) explained that male stereotypes, being more valued, meant that association with such valued characteristics produced a higher level of self-evaluation.

It would seem that because masculine traits are perceived as valued ones, that those who associate themselves with such characteristics would express the highest levels of self-esteem. However, more recent research counters such a generalization. Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp (1975) found a positive correlation in both males and females between masculinity and femininity as measured by the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp, 1974) and self-esteem on the Texas Social Behavior Inventory (Helmreich, Stapp, and Ervin, 1974). These results suggest that the two factors or masculinity and femininity function in an additive way to determine an individual's self image and evaluation. As Spence et. al. write, "These data suggest that androgyny

. . . may lead to the most socially desirable consequences, the absolute strength of both components influencing attitudinal and behavioral outcomes from the individual (Spence et. al., 1975, p. 35)."

Using a different measure of sexual identity, the Adjective Check List (Gough and Heilbrun, 1965), Heilbrun (1976) found results similar to Spence et. al.'s. Utilizing the Block (1961) psychometric measure of role consistency and ego identity, androgynous individuals were found to be higher in adjustment ($t(192)=27.50$, $p < .001$).

Such results as the above are not difficult to explain in light of the conceptualization of androgyny. Androgyny is viewed as a multidimensional view of one's sexual identity with high degrees of association with both masculinity and femininity. In other areas, androgynous individuals have been found to behave well in cross-identified situations (Bem, 1975) because of their psychological freedom to engage in appropriate behavior regardless of sexual identification (Bem and Lenney, 1976). Referring to the social interaction perspective (Mead, 1934), such an emphasis on situations allows for greater flexibility in adapting roles to a sense of awareness and adjustment. For example, Eman (1977) found androgynous identities to be most capable of adapting their language to various situations.

Several studies have indicated that androgynous identities have demonstrated the "best" of both masculinity and femininity. Switkin (1974) found androgynous identities to disclose more than feminine females because androgyny combined "talk-orientation" with masculine traits of self-reliance which allowed for greater disclosure. Androgynous females have been found to be more self-reliant and self-confident than feminine females and score higher on achievement, dominance and endurance scores (Rainey, 1976).

Thus, because androgynous individuals are multidimensional and rely on the positive characteristics of both the masculine and feminine roles, depending upon the context, they are said to be better adjusted and one would expec

an androgynous individual to record a higher level of self-esteem than other sexual identities.

Self-Acceptance: Closely related to self-esteem is the construct self-acceptance. Self-esteem and self-acceptance have been linked as self-evaluation variables (Farr and Kubiniec, 1972). Self-acceptance has been defined as "acceptance and expression of the inner core of self (Maslow, 1968, p. 197)." The common denominator in self-acceptance is the degree of self-satisfaction in self-evaluation (Crowne and Stephens, 1961). Although conceptually related, the constructs of self-esteem and self-acceptance are defined as different by Wells and Marwell (1976). Self-esteem is being proud of oneself or evaluating one's attributes highly, while self-acceptance is respecting oneself (Wylie, 1961).

Research concerning the sex variable, or more accurately perceived sexual identity, as related to self-acceptance is limited. Cherniss (1972) found that those women who were associated with the women's movement (operationally defined as nontraditional women) scored high on self-esteem and had a greater sense of self-acceptance. This has been explained by Hjelle and Butterfield (1974). A female who is self-accepting is one who relies on her own internal norms without seeking constant support from others; is self-reliant, less burdened by guilts, regrets, and resentments; is one who sees her own worth; and, is sensitive to her own needs and feelings. Such an explanation generally corresponds with the conceptualization of the balance of masculinity and femininity in the androgynous identity.

Further evidence has been provided by Hjelle and Butterfield (1974) where feminists (women with nontraditional attitudes toward multiple roles in society) were more self-accepting and expressed greater approval of their self-concepts than women with traditional attitudes. Women in professional (nontraditional) occupations have also demonstrated higher levels of self-esteem and self-acceptance than nonprofessional (traditional) women (Ohlbaum, 1971).

Males classified as self-accepting have demonstrated acceptance of women as persons rather than as sex-determined roles (Doyle, 1975). Doyle suggested that those men are able to relate more positively with others, especially women, when they can first relate positively to themselves.

Thus, because of the masculine-feminine balance in the androgynous individual, one would expect androgynous people to be more self-accepting than other sexual identities.

Acceptance of Others: Self-acceptance and the acceptance of others are said to be highly interrelated (Hammachek, 1971). Because of selective perception, how individuals accept themselves is related to how they accept others (Levanway, 1955; Phillips, 1951; Richmond, Mason and Padgett, 1972; Tubbs and Baird, 1976; Wylie, 1957). Similar to Maslow's (1968) generalizations about self-actualized individuals, self-accepting individuals accept themselves, others and the natural world for what they are.

Research concerning sexual identity and acceptance of others is limited. Generally, it is accepted that one's self-concept is related to psychological adjustment (Rogers, 1961; Snygg and Combs, 1949). From the social interactionist's perspective, such adjustment comes from meeting the expectations of others which is rewarding to the individual (Thibaut and Kelley, 1969).

Acceptance of others has been viewed as an inextricable component of social self-esteem (Ziller, Long, Ramana, and Reddy, 1968). A positive relation between self-esteem and acceptance of others has been demonstrated by Vavrik and Jurich (1971). Thus, generalizations about the androgynous identity in relation to self-esteem should also apply to acceptance of others. According to Kelly's personal construct theory (1955), an individual who has perceived similar constructs will be more able to see those traits in others, and because of social comparison theoretical assumptions (Festinger, 1954) should also be more accepting of those others. With the multidimensional approach of the androgynous identity allowing for more diversified constructs,

this identity is hypothesized to be more accepting of others than other identities.

STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESIS

As the above review indicates, past research combined with the theoretical conception of androgyny support differences across sexual identity and the self-evaluation variables of self-esteem, self-acceptance and acceptance of others. The present study examined a multivariate approach to the functional relationship of such variables. Specifically, it tested the hypothesis that:

> the group of androgynous identified individuals will express higher degrees of self-esteem, self-acceptance and acceptance of others than groups of masculine, feminine, or undifferentiated identified individuals.

In statistical terms, the multivariate means (centroids) for the androgynous group will be larger than those of the remaining three groups of masculine, feminine and undifferentiated.

METHOD

Subjects

Ss were 217 undergraduate students enrolled in the basic interpersonal communication course at Miami (Ohio) University. Two-hundred of the original 217 provided useable responses to all tests. All instruments were completed in class as part of the regularly scheduled meeting.

Instrumentation

Sexual Identity: Because this study viewed the independent variable of sexual identity from a social perspective, the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) was used. The BSRI has reported high internal consistency scores of .86 and .86 for masculinity and .80 and .82 for femininity across two samples (Bem, 1974). Test-retest reliability indicated high scores over a four-week interval (masculinity=.90 and femininity=.90 and androgyny=.93) for a college sample population.

The BSRI produced scores of degree of association with masculinity and femininity. Medians of these scores were used to divide Ss into one of four

categories: androgynous (high masculine-high feminine), masculine (high masculine-low feminine), feminine (low masculine-high feminine) and undifferentiated (low masculine-low feminine). For the present study median scores of 94 and 95, masculinity and femininity respectively, were used to classify the 200 Ss. Cell sizes were: androgynous (Group 1)=53, masculine (Group 2)=54, feminine (Group 3)=46 and undifferentiated (Group 4)=47.

Self-Esteem: The Texas Social Behavior Inventory (TSBI) (Helmreich, Stapp, and Ervin, 1974) was used to measure self-esteem. This instrument was selected because of its demonstrated reliability as a measure of social evaluation. Helmreich et. al. (1974) reported high test-retest scores of .94 for males and .93 for females. No significant differences between biological sex have been found on the total scale scores. The TSBI has proved useful as a means of categorizing research populations on self-esteem (Ervin, 1969; Helmreich, Aronson, and LeFan, 1970; Kimble and Helmreich, 1972).

Self-Acceptance: This dependent variable was measured by Berger's (1952) Expressed Acceptance of Self Scale. This measure taps self-acceptance in social contexts. Berger (1952) reported Spearman-Brown reliability estimates equal to or exceeding .75 across several samples. Omwake (1954) reported convergent validity of the Berger measure by finding that it correlated .73 with the Phillips Self-Acceptance Scale and .49 with the Bills Self-Acceptance Scale. McCroskey, Richmond, Daly, and Falcione (1977) have also reported internal reliability of .89 for a student sample and .91 for a teacher sample.

Acceptance of Others: The Fey Acceptance of Others Scale (1955) was used to measure this construct. Fey (1955) has reported split-half reliability scores of .90.

Design and Data Analysis: The hypothesis in this study was concerned with examining four levels of one independent variable and three dependent variables simultaneously as a single system. Thus, a multivariate analysis was considered appropriate (Cooley and Lohnes, 1971). In order to determine

if the mean vectors of the four groups were different, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed. To determine the linear combinations of the dependent variables maximizing the differences among the four groups, a multiple discriminant analysis was performed. Plotting of centroids provided an examination of differences among the groups. Alpha was set at .05.

RESULTS

As expected the MANOVA across the four sexual identity groups was significant ($F=6.3667$; $df=9$ and 472.30; $p < .0001$). This indicated that the dependent variables of self-esteem, self-acceptance and acceptance of others varied significantly across the sexual identity groups.

The discriminant analysis produced standardized discriminant function coefficients of 1.0464, -.0371, and -.1701 for self-esteem, self-acceptance and acceptance of others, respectively (See Table 1). Bartlett's Chi-Square test indicated that only the first discriminant function ($F=54.4823$; $df=9$; $p < .0001$ (See Table 2) was significant, accounting for 87.99 percent of the variance. This function[1] was labeled self-esteem.

In order to examine the multivariate means of the variables across the four groups, group centroids[2] (multivariate means weighted according to discriminant functions) were plotted. (See Table 3). T[illegible]lysis showed that maximum separation occurred between the androgynous and the undifferentiated identities. The androgynous and masculine means grouped together at the higher scores and the feminine and undifferentiated means grouped together at the lower scores.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study confirmed the hypothesis that the group of androgynous identified individuals will express higher degrees of self-esteem, self-acceptance and acceptance of others than groups of masculine, feminine or undifferentiated identified individuals. The multivariate analysis of variance clearly demonstrated that sexual identities differ in their expressed self-esteem, self-acceptance and acceptance of others when these variables are

examined as a system. The multiple discriminant analysis indicated that self-esteem was that function which maximally discriminated among the groups. Using the discriminant function coefficients to appropriately weight the group means for the three variables combined, the authors examined the centroids plotted in Table 3 to identify differences and similarities among the groups.

When plotted, the centroids demonstrated that androgynous and undifferentiated identities were the most different (separated by 16.15 points) with androgynous identified individuals expressing higher scores on the combined variables. Thus, the multidimensional approach of androgyny did allow a more positive evaluation of oneself than if one did not associate with clearly defined characteristics of either femininity or masculinity. Further examination of the centroids pointed out that the androgynous identity and the masculine identity were more alike, both scoring on the higher end of the scores (73.29 and 71.64, respectively), and the feminine and undifferentiated identities were more alike, scoring on the lower end of the scores (60.48 and 57.14 respectively). It would appear that masculine identities, as well as androgynous identities, were able to view themselves and others in a more positive way. These results are similar to those of Eman (1977) when she found androgynous and masculine identities more able to adapt language to situations than feminine or undifferentiated identities.

The closeness of the masculine identity centroid to the androgyny identity centroid (1.65 difference) can be explained by examining the characteristics of the masculine identity. A masculine person is characterized as independent, aggressive, forceful. Because they do not have to depend on others for a sense of self-value, they tend to be more sure of themselves and thus, they scored higher on the tested variables in this study than undifferentiated identities (those who are without a definite association) and feminine identities (those who are operationally associated with characteristics such as dependent, gullible, and yielding). From Bochner and Kelley's and Delia's perspectives such an identity

would be considered as having a high level of adaptability, thus, making them more interpersonally competent. However, when the person is able to combine that high association with masculine characteristics with a high association with feminine characteristics, (androgynous) the person is even more behaviorally flexible.

The conclusions of this study do support the multidimensional approach of the androgyny identity in relation to self-evaluation variables. Androgynous individuals demonstrated higher levels of combined self-esteem, self-acceptance and acceptance of others. Thus, it is possible that the androgyny identity is the most capable of being interpersonally competent. It would seem from such results that to improve one's interpersonal competency, the multidimensional approach accenting the flexibility of high affiliation with both feminine and masculine characteristics would be most appropriate. Although this study "indicated" such a conclusion, more research is needed to assure such findings. Before such sweeping generalizations can be made, elements of interpersonal competency need to be examined in relation to sexual identity. Does the androgynous identity express higher levels of those elements described as contributing to interpersonal competency?

The high amount of variance accounted for by the one maximally discriminating function of Root 1 which was labeled self-esteem indicated that it was the factor which distinguished most among the groups. Thus, when removing the effect of self-esteem, self-acceptance provided only twelve percent of the variance and acceptance of others less than one percent. It was evident from these results that only the self-esteem factor contributed to the differences among the groups.

It should be noted at this juncture that the mean scores for the acceptance of others variable across the four groups only deviated 2.93 points. Such a small variation in scores could have been due to the instrument used. The scale used (Fey, 1955) has reported high reliability scores, but because

of its possible dated questions (1955) perhaps it does not provide valid information for discriminating between the groups. It should also be remembered that the subjects used in this study were college freshmen and sophomores and were tested at the beginning of an academic school year. It is possible that at such a time, these particular people are overly accepting of others regardless of any distinguishing characteristics among the groups.

CONCLUSIONS

This study was concerned with an investigation of the impact of sexual identity on levels of self-esteem, self-acceptance and acceptance of others. It was hypothesized that because of a multidimensional approach and psychological freedom, the androgynous identity would be higher in self-evaluation on these variables. Results have supported the hypothesis.

Earlier research by Spence, et. al. (1975) and Heilbrun (1976) indicated similar results to this study, but were only able to provide correlated findings. The present study reported significant differences among the four identities. It was also found that the masculine and androgynous persons reported higher self-evaluation, than undifferentiated and feminine identities.

While the authors concur with Bochner and Kelley's and Delia's contention that effective communicators are behaviorally flexible, the present study suggests flexibility is mediated by one's sexual identity. Indeed, the way one views one's self and one's ability to accept others are a function of one's sexual identity. The relationship between sexual identity, behavioral flexibility and interpersonal competence warrants further exploration.

TABLE 1

Discrimination Data for Multivariate
Comparison of Centroids

MEANS

Group	Self-Esteem	Self-Acceptance	Acceptance of Others
1. Androgynous	85.51	140.4	64.43
2. Masculine	83.22	133.8	61.50
3. Feminine	72.87	131.1	64.01
4. Undifferentiated	69.06	124.2	61.77

Standardized Disciminant Function Coefficients

1.0462*	.0371	.1701

CENTROIDS

Androgynous	= 73.3
Masculine	= 71.6
Feminine	= 60.5
Undifferentiated	= 57.1

*Maximally discriminating variable

TABLE 2

Bartlett's Chi-Square Test of
Significance for discriminant functions

Roots	x^2	df	p
1	54.4323	9	.0001
2	7.1743	4	.1270
3	.0087	1	.9256

TABLE 3

Centroids Across Sexual-Identity Groups

Undifferentiated	Feminine	Masculine	Androgynous
57.14 *	60.48 *	71.64 *	73.29 *

56 58 60 62 64 66 70 72 74

FOOTNOTES

[1] The optimum function is that which "maximizes the ratio of the among-group sum of squares to the within-group sum of squares, so that among-group differences will be large relative to within-group scatter" (Cooley and Lohnes, 1971, p. 246).

[2] Centroids were calculated using the group means in Table 1 and the discriminant function coefficients in Table 1. By combining the standardized discriminant function coefficients with the centroid comparisons, one is able to determine which variates contributed most to the total variance and significant differences among groups. In this case, that function was self-esteem.

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